

Letter to the Editor

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The Juneau District Cooperative Extension Service provides free energy-saving information for residents facing electricity rates that will likely quintuple in the next few weeks. Factsheets by Energy Specialist, Rich Seifert, are available at the district office located in the Bill Ray Center and can be downloaded from the UAF Cooperative Extension website: www.uaf.edu/ces/energy

A good first step in reducing power usage is to minimize the energy used by home electronics. You may not be aware that many appliances continue to draw power even when switched off. These “phantom loads” occur in most appliances that use electricity, such as TVs, VCR/DVDs, computers, kitchen appliances, and anything with a clock. The energy use of electronic equipment often goes unnoticed. But as it turns out, an estimated 10-15% of all electricity used in American homes can be attributed to the buzz of electronic devices.

The simplest and most obvious way to eliminate power losses is to unplug products when not in use. Search the wall sockets in your house for hidden un-connected chargers and other devices that don't need to be plugged in. When you detach your cell phone or similar device from its charger, unplug the charger too. These power supplies consume electricity as long as they are connected to a power outlet, whether or not the product is on or off, and even if it is disconnected. You'll know a charger is using energy when it has been plugged in for a while and it is warm to the touch.

Use a power strip with an on/off switch for home electronics, appliances, and office equipment. This allows you to turn off all power to the devices in one easy step. Once the power strip is turned off, no power will be delivered to the outlets, thereby eliminating power wasted by power supplies.